

Fall 8-15-2006

## ENG 3005-001: Technical Communication

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### Recommended Citation

Fredrick, Terri, "ENG 3005-001: Technical Communication" (2006). *Fall 2006*. 103.  
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## ENGLISH 3005: TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

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Office hours: MWF 9:00-10:45; W 2:00-3:00; and by appointment

### INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

English 3005 focuses on communication (written, oral, and visual) created within professional settings. Particular emphasis is placed on adapting communication to specific audiences and purposes. In addition to teaching new content material, this course is designed to be a professionalizing experience. For this reason, skills such as collaboration, technology use, and independent management of deadlines and policies make up an important part of the course. Specific objectives for this class are as follows:

- Demonstrate your ability to adapt communication to specific audiences, purposes, and contexts
- Identify and create generic forms of technical communication (proposals, progress reports, reports, instructions, etc)
- Develop and use effective collaborative strategies
- Develop awareness of your own ability to successfully approach, adapt to, and complete new (previously untried) communication situations
- Learn and implement basic principles of effective document design
- Demonstrate awareness of ethical considerations in technical communication
- Develop strategies to balance multiple projects and deadlines

### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Markel, Mike. *Technical Communication*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition
- Reliable on- or off-campus access to a computer and the Internet
- Suggested: the lab requires USB “thumb” drives (also known as “jump” or “flash” drives) for data storage. Please consider buying one.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Individual Assignments:** You will complete 11 small projects, each of which will ask you to practice skills and engage content that we discuss in class. Some of the individual projects will connect directly to the three group assignments.

**Group Project #1 – Analytical Report:** Your group will research a local (on-campus or in Charleston) issue and then create a written report analyzing several options followed by a recommendation. The report will be directed to one or more “decision-makers.”

**Group Project #2 – Instructions and Usability Testing:** Your group will create instructions for using software available in the library’s classroom lab. You will create both written instructions and a classroom tutorial (to teach your classmates). You will plan and run usability tests of your written and oral instructions and then revise the instructions based on the feedback you receive.

**Group Project #3 – Professional Development Project:** Your group will design and carry out a project on campus or in the local community. This project should take into consideration each group member's interests and professional goals. The group will write a proposal, carry out the project, and then provide a formal report and presentation on the project's results.

**Professional Portfolio:** At the end of the semester, you will develop a professional portfolio that highlights your skills and qualifications. The portfolio will be directed toward potential employers and might be paper-based or electronic.

**Reading Homework:** For each reading assignment, I will post questions on WebCT. The questions must be answered prior to class time in order to receive credit. You are welcome to use your book as you answer the questions. Note: If class discussions or homework results indicate that students are not completing the reading effectively, I will incorporate quizzes as well, but no one wants that!

#### ASSESSMENT

Assignments will be graded holistically on content, organization, expression, and correctness as adapted to the audience and context for which you are writing. Each assignment will include specific assessment criteria. A more detailed breakdown of points can be found under the assignments links.

Assignment	% grade
Individual Assignments	35.0
Group Assignment #1	9.0
Group Assignment #2	16.5
Group Assignment #3	17.5
Group minutes	2.5
Individual grade for group work	7.0
Professional Portfolio	5.0
Homework	7.5

#### Note:

I reserve the right to make additions and alterations to this assessment breakdown should the need arise. Students will be informed in class and in writing prior to any changes being made.

#### WRITING CENTERED COURSE

You should consider submitting an essay written for this class to the Electronic Writing Portfolio or EWP. Please visit the following web address for information on the submission process:

<[www.eiu.edu/~assess/electronic\\_writing\\_portfolio1.htm](http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/electronic_writing_portfolio1.htm)>. The course deadline for EWP submissions is Monday, December 04, 2006.

#### ATTENDANCE:

Your presence in class is expected; failure to attend class regularly will result in a reduction in your grade. To be more specific:

- You have 150 minutes (3 class periods) of vacation/sick time to use as you choose. Beginning with the fourth absence, each absence will lower your final course grade by 3%.
- **Seven absences will result in a failing grade in the course.**
- One-time tardiness of more than 10 minutes or frequent tardiness of five minutes or more will result in a reduction of your available vacation/sick time.

- Dates represented on the syllabus with an asterisk represent workshop days where you may choose whether to work in or out of class (I will be present in the classroom to work with individuals or groups on these dates). Should you choose to work from home on a date with an asterisk, you do not need to count this as an absence.

### EXPECTED CONDUCT

This class focuses on communicating in professional settings. In a workplace setting, certain types of conduct would be expected and outlined in a code of conduct. We have one here, too. In addition to your vacation/sick time, pay attention to the following course policies:

- Class correspondence (i.e., emails you send to someone in the class, including me) should be written professionally and according to the expectations of the business world.
- You are expected to convert your documents as necessary to be able to work on them in class. I will give you advice and out-of-class assistance at your request, but I expect you to have a basic understanding of word processing and/or the willingness to spend time out of class learning features of software programs that will improve the appearance of your documents.
- Keep multiple copies of all the work you produce for this class. Don't delete files once you've turned in the assignment.
- Class time is for doing work related to the course. Checking or sending email, surfing the web, using Facebook or instant messenger, text messaging, etc. should be done on your own time.
- All major assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.
- Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. According to English Department policy, "any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism...has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office." If you are in doubt of the appropriate way to identify your source, check with me before turning in the assignment.
- Late assignments will be docked 5% each day until they are turned in. Reading homework may not be submitted once class has begun. The daily syllabus and WebCT calendar list all due dates for assignments. You are responsible for keeping track of any deadlines.

**Note: Any student who turns in all homework and meets all individual and group assignment deadlines (including no requests for extensions) during the semester will have the option to throw out one individual assignment grade.**

If you find you cannot abide by the conduct code for some reason, deal with the problem as you would in the workplace—professionally, courteously, and in advance.

### INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Most accommodations may be easily met in this class. If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.



# ENGLISH 3005: TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

## DAILY SYLLABUS

White rows = Coleman Hall 3210 (computer lab); Yellow rows = Coleman Hall 3140

DATE	DUE	IN-CLASS ACTIVITY
Aug 21	Due: WebCT post (11:59 p.m.)	Introduction to course; computers
Aug 23	Read: Ch 1; pages 354-357	Class: Discuss TC experiences Groups: Exercise page 13, #3
Aug 25	Read pgs 31-35; Due: Individual assignment (IA) #1 (4 p.m.)	Class: Discuss writing process
Aug 28	Read: Ch 2	Class: Discuss ethics and IA #2-3
Aug 30	Read: Ch 4; pgs 447-450	Class: Discuss collaboration and Group assignment (GA) #1 Groups: Form groups
Sep 1	Read: Ch 5; pages 98-102 Due: IA #2 (4 p.m.)	Class: Discuss audience/purpose Groups/Ind: Analyze audience and purpose for GA #1 and IA #3
Sep 04	No School	
Sep 06	Read: Ch 8; pages 434-438	Class: Discuss persuasive comm. and writing field reports
Sep 08	Read: pages 352-353; 454-463 Due: GA #1 research findings	Class: Discuss recommendation reports
Sep 11*	Due: IA #3 (4 p.m.)	Groups: Work on GA #1
Sep 13	Read: Ch 10	Class: Discuss coherence
Sep 15	Read: Ch 11 Bring: Copies of GA #1 report	Class: Discuss sentence style Groups: Apply Ch10-11 to drafts
Sep 18	Due: GA #1 report and minutes	Class: Discuss/assess group work
Sep 20	Read: pgs 497-509	Class: Discuss instruction writing and IA #4; do instructions activity
Sep 22		Class: Discuss GA #2 Groups: Brainstorm project ideas
Sep 25	Bring: Draft of IA #4	Class: Analyze sample instructions Individual: Revise IA #4
Sep 27	Read: pgs 521-523 Due: IA #4 (4 p.m.)	Class: Discuss usability testing Groups: Plan GA #2 usability tests
Sep 29	Read: Ch 12 Due: GA #2 usability plan	Class: Discuss document design
Oct 02	Read: Ch 13	Class: Discuss graphics and IA #5

Oct 04		Class: Practice document design
Oct 06*	Due: GA #2 usability test results	Groups: Work on GA #2
Oct 09	Read: Ch 21	Class: Discuss oral presentations
Oct 11*	Due: IA #5 (4 p.m.)	Groups: Work on GA #2
Oct 13	No school	
Oct 16	MEET IN LIBRARY LAB	Class: Group presentations
Oct 18	MEET IN LIBRARY LAB	Class: Group presentations
Oct 20	Due: GA #2 written instructions, minutes, and individual assessments Read: 363-382	Class: Discuss resumes and IA #6
Oct 23	Bring: IA #6 draft	Class: Discuss GA #3 and IA #7 Groups: Review/revise IA #6; brainstorm GA #3
Oct 25	Read: Ch 16 Due: IA #7	Class: Discuss proposals and IA #8
Oct 27*	Schedule: Group meeting with me	Groups: Work on GA #3
Oct 30*		Groups: Work on GA #3 Individual: Work on IA #6 and #8
Nov 01*	Due: GA #3 proposal and IA #6	Groups: Work on GA #3 Individual: Work on IA #8
Nov 03*	Due: IA #8 (4 p.m.)	Groups: Work on GA #3
Nov 06	Read: pgs 336-351	Class: Discuss letters and IA #9
Nov 08		Class: Discuss letters
Nov 10	Read: pgs 438-447 Due: IA #9 (4 p.m.)	Class: Discuss progress reports and IA #10 Groups: Work on GA #3
Nov 13	Read: Ch 18	Class: Discuss formal reports
Nov 15*	Due: IA #10 (1/2 of class)	Groups: Work on GA #3
Nov 17*		Groups: Work on GA #3
<b>Thanksgiving Break – No school</b>		
Nov 27	Due: IA #10 (1/2 of class) Bring: IA #1	Class: Discuss professional portfolios
Nov 29*	Schedule: Meeting with me to discuss portfolio plan	Groups: Work on GA #3 Individual: Work on portfolio
Dec 01	Bring: Drafts of GA #3 report	Class: Review/revise GA #3 drafts

Dec 04	Bring: <i>Revised</i> drafts of GA #3 report	Class/groups: Prepare abstract, title page, cover letter
Dec 06	Due: GA #3 report and minutes	Class: GA #3 presentations
Dec 08*	Due: Portfolios (4 p.m.) Due: Individual assessment of GA #3 collaboration (4 p.m.)	
FINAL		Time and Location TBA